

MEDIATION IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

IMPROVING SKILLS THROUGH GLOBAL ISSUES

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WHAT IS MEDIATION?

- Mediation includes activities that:
- Aid understanding between people
- Make things more comprehensible
- Make connection between ideas and information
- Support 'talking things through' to reach new conclusions

CEFR AND MEDIATION

- Reception: comprehension in listening and reading
- Production: formulating something new to say and write
- Interaction: engaging in conversation or written exchanges
- Mediation: adjusting the message for the recipient

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF MEDIATION ACTIVITIES?

- The demands of communication are rapidly changing in the 21st century
- Communication online is increasingly intercultural
- We have to use language to be adaptable and cooperate
- Teaching mediation activities will help students to be more versatile and successful communicators in this changing environment

MEDIATION

- In the CEFR mediation is defined as:
- someone ‘acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another’ (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)
- The language activities and corresponding scales identified for this skill are grouped in three categories:
- Mediating a text: using one’s own words to pass on information to someone who does not have access to it
- Mediating concepts: sharing ideas and working with others to reach a solution
- Mediating communication: helping others understand each other by bridging sociocultural differences

EXAMPLES OF MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

- an 8-year-old Chinese student translating to her mother, who does not speak Spanish, the content of a leaflet advertising a new guitar course at the school (i.e. Mediating a text: Translating a written text in speech)
- a group of 12-year-old students discussing ideas to organise work for their science project (i.e. Mediating concepts: Collaborating in a group)
- a 16-year-old Mexican student explaining to his Spanish classmates and teacher the difference between Mexican and Spanish *tortilla* (i.e. Mediating communication: Facilitating pluricultural space).

BENEFITS OF MEDIATION

- Young learners already act as ‘mediators’ when discussing texts, collaborating and communicating meaning, both in class and in those contexts that are familiar to them. Nonetheless, including mediation in the language classroom would provide additional practice for students to reflect on and learn how to make the most of their language to achieve the **desired effect** on their **target audience** when involved in such situations.

MEDIATION IN THE CLASSROOM

- Practising mediation in the classroom can help students to learn how to engage in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication
- For example, the Chinese child translating for her mother and the Mexican teenager comparing dishes, are more likely to be aware of how to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers than most of their peers
- Presenting young learners with activities in which sociocultural mediation is necessary—such as act-outs, debates and role-plays to mention a few—would be an effective way to broaden all the students' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire

MEDIATION IN THE CLASSROOM

- Mediation could focus on connecting useful strategies for learners to develop and use 21st century skills
- In a mediation task language learners are naturally brought to receive and produce texts (i.e. literacy skills), negotiate meaning, formulate hypotheses and suggest alternatives (i.e. learning skills), as well as to be flexible and take initiative (i.e. life skills)